

Obey ANNOUNCES advancement OF WISCONSIN AGRICULTURE & RURAL DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

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WASHINGTON, D.C. – Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) announced today the U.S. House Agriculture Appropriations Subcommittee approved a bill that contained support for several of Wisconsin's agriculture and rural development priorities. Obey, who is Chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, worked to secure the funding.

"This bill invests in agriculture and rural communities, including a number of provisions that are especially important in Wisconsin," Obey said. "These are tough economic times and we need to bolster the help available to rural families and communities. We have made significant investments in an effort to benefit farmers and rural communities and to create more economic opportunity."

Obey said the bill invests in "a number of programs that are vital to combating the spread of animal and plant diseases throughout Wisconsin and the United States." Among these are:

Animal Identification – Funding will assist in the continued development of Wisconsin's premises registration and animal identification and tracking program to help combat Chronic Wasting Disease, Bovine Tuberculosis, H1N1, Avian Influenza and other animal diseases. Specifically, it will enable the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture to continue its contract with the Wisconsin Livestock Identification Consortium and assist farmers with technical assistance, electronic tagging, development of related software and hardware, construction of necessary infrastructure at dealers, markets and slaughter facilities, and development of GIS applications to integrate premises and animal movement data.

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Fighting Chronic Wasting Disease - Funding will help the State continue to manage and contain the problem of Chronic Wasting Disease among farmed and free-ranging white-tailed deer, facilitating the movement towards microchipping and the application of official identification among farmed herds, tissue collection, testing and surveillance, carcass disposal and other activities to control the disease among free-ranging herds.

Fighting Johne's Disease - Funding will support State strategies to control Johne's Disease, a debilitating disease in cattle similar to Crohn's disease in humans, including operation of the nation's only online veterinary certification program, on-farm consultation providing evaluation and development of herd management plans, and disease containment.

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Viral Hemorrhagic Septicemia (VHS) Management – Funding will be used to support fish health analysts and inspectors to ensure compliance with VHS testing and data analysis to monitor and ensure the health of the vital Great Lakes fishery. VHS is a devastating disease that has been found in a wide variety of fish throughout the Great Lakes. Wisconsin has 350 commercial fish farms and a multi-billion dollar sports fishing industry in the state that fishery experts fear could be at great risk, making it vital to get a handle on this terrible disease.

□ **Potato Pest Management** - Funds will be used to reduce reliance on high-risk pesticides and help create new markets for potatoes under integrated pest management practices. As a direct result of this funding, Wisconsin potato growers are developing niche markets for potatoes (and soon other commodities) that are grown in a sustainable manner.

Other Wisconsin priorities included in the bill are:

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Cranberry Research Program – This funding builds on the \$1.25 million that Obey and Senator Kohl secured last year to develop a Cranberry Research Program within the Agricultural Research Service of USDA. It will be used to study new technologies to assist cranberry growers in complying with federal and state environmental regulations, increasing production, developing growing techniques, establishing more efficient growing methods and educating cranberry growers about sustainable growth practices.

Nanotechnology and Sustainable Waste Management Initiatives – This funding will enable the University of Wisconsin Institute for Sustainable Technologies, a center for technical innovation and economic development in sustainable technologies, to provide state-of-the-art education and research through a multidisciplinary approach encompassing biorefining, biofuels, waste engineering, forestry, business and economics, chemistry and biology, and communications.

Wisconsin Grazing Lands Conservation Initiative – Many small dairy farmers have found that they can be more efficient and profitable by adopting low-input and sustainable farming practices, but their success often depends on getting specialist help, including technical assistance and continuing education. The Wisconsin Grazing Lands Initiative provides that help for Wisconsin dairy farmers.

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UW-Extension Northern Aquaculture Demonstration Facility – Funding supports an extension education and outreach program located on the Red Cliff Lake Superior Chippewa Indian Reservation and administered by the UW-Stevens Point which seeks to address the needs of fish farms and hatcheries in Wisconsin and other northern states where cold climates create unique challenges and opportunities.

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UW-Stout Pilot Technology Transfer – This funding will help the Northwest Manufacturing Outreach Center/UW Stout Technology Transfer Program continue to enhance the ability of small manufacturing businesses to make use of changes in technology in order to improve efficiency. For more than 10 years, funding through USDA has enabled UW-Stout and the Northwest Manufacturing Outreach Center to provide technical assistance to help improve efficiency at over a thousand small manufacturing businesses throughout northern and central Wisconsin. Those efforts have created or saved thousands of manufacturing jobs and have generated a total sales impact estimated at over \$340 million.

Obey noted that, “the bill must still be approved by the full House and Senate and signed by the President before it becomes law , but having these funds included in today’s version means that a major hurdle has been cleared.”

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